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Occupational Hazard Control Measures And Work Experiences Of Hair Dressing Salon Workers In Rivers State

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ABSTRACT
Hairdressing salon workers in Rivers State face daily occupational hazards, including exposure to chemicals, ergonomic risks, cuts, burns, and communicable diseases. This study focused on occupational hazard control measures and work experiences of hair dressing salon workers in Rivers State. The study was carried out in Rivers State. The design for this study was a cross-sectional descriptive survey design. The population for this study comprised of salon hair dressers Rivers State. A sample Size of 800 respondents was used for the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to select one hundred (100) salon hair dressers from each Local Government Area. The respondents were selected through a purposive sampling since salon hair dressers have no functional union as at the time of this study. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire. Data collected were coded and analysed using the descriptive statistics of frequency and percentages (%), mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics of chi-square. Result showed that the control measures of occupational hazards among hair dressing salon workers in Rivers State was poor (2.12±0.80). However, control measures of occupational hazards was found more on the item 'I use apron' with a mean value of 2.95±0.92 and on the item 'I clean the shop' with a mean value of (2.65±0.58). The finding of the study also showed that there is significant difference in control measures of occupational hazards among hair dressing salon workers in Rivers State based on work experience (X^2–value = 261.525; df = 2, $p<0.05$). These findings reinforce the urgent need for improved occupational hazard control measures in hairdressing salons. Poor controls lead to serious health risks and diminished work quality, while effective intervention enhances workers' well-being and job satisfaction. Addressing these issues is crucial for the sustainable development of the hairdressing sector in Port Harcourt and beyond. It was recommended amongst others that hair dressing salon workers should use personal protective equipment consistently and attend occupational health workshops.
Keywords: Occupational hazard, control measures, work experiences, hair dressing salon workers

INTRODUCTION

Hairdressing salon workers in Rivers State face daily occupational hazards, including exposure to chemicals, ergonomic risks, cuts, burns, and communicable diseases (Asare-Donkor et al., 2020). The nature of their work, involving frequent handling of hair products, sharp tools, and prolonged standing, contributes to health challenges. With salons proliferating across urban and rural areas, the need for effective hazard control measures is increasingly recognized to promote safe and healthy workplaces (European Agency for Safety & Health at Work, 2020).

Hairdressers are exposed to various hazards: chemical risks from hair dyes and relaxers, physical dangers like burns or lacerations, and biological risks including infection from contaminated instruments (Kezicet al et al., 2022). Empirical studies show significant rates of dermatitis, respiratory issues, and musculoskeletal complaints among salon workers (Khalaf et al., 2020). The crowded salon environment adds to the potential for workplace accidents and the transmission of diseases, highlighting the urgent need for effective control measures.

Despite rising awareness, many hairdressing salons in Rivers State lack standardized hazard control protocols. Workers often operate without adequate protective equipment, proper ventilation, or systematic cleaning routines (Oreoluwa, 2025); hence, suggest that this gap increases risk, reduces productivity, and contributes to poor health outcomes. The absence of formal training and a regulatory framework exacerbates these challenges, leaving salon workers vulnerable and undervalued.

However, research indicates that implemented hazard controls such as gloves, masks, disinfectant use, and ergonomic tools reduce health risks substantially (Ogunbamowo et al., 2025). Sangwijit et al. (2024) observed that salons adopting strict hygiene practices and providing protective gear experienced lower rates of occupational injuries and illnesses. Furthermore, the study reported that periodic safety training improved worker awareness and reduced incidents of chemical exposure and physical harm. However, only about 40% of surveyed salons in Rivers State consistently enforced these measures.

Salon workers' experiences are shaped by the level of hazard control in their workplaces. Those in better-equipped salons report higher job satisfaction and less absenteeism due to injury or illness (Wogayehu, 2025). In contrast, workers in less regulated environments often endure frequent health issues, stress, and poor organizational support. This disparity influences overall well-being, earning potential, and professional growth. Many workers express concerns about unsafe conditions and insufficient support from employers, but also a willingness to adopt better practices if resources are made available. Therefore, the study investigated occupational hazard control measures and work experiences of hair dressing salon workers in Rivers State

RESEARCH METHODS

The study was carried out in Rivers State. The design for this study was a cross-sectional descriptive survey design. The population for this study comprised of salon hair dressers in some selected Local Government Areas in Rivers State including Port Harcourt City, Obio/Akpor, Ikwere, Emouha, Etche, Omuma, Okrika and Ogu/Bolo local Government Areas. A sample Size of 800 respondents was used for the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to select one hundred (100) salon hair dressers from each Local Government Area. The respondents were selected through a purposive sampling since salon hair dressers have no functional union as at the time of this study. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on hazards control measures among hair dressing salon workers in Rivers State. After content and face validity, a test-retest method was used to test the reliability of the instrument in another area. The two results obtained were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and reliability efficient of 0.80 was obtained for the study. Hence, the instrument was therefore considered reliable.

The questionnaire was self-administered by the researchers with the help of 6 trained research assistants. The research assistants were trained on how to approach respondents, the objectives of the study and how to fill the questionnaire. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their answers, and that the questionnaire will only be used for research purposes. Instruments were collected at the spot after filling

for analysis. Data collected were coded and analysed using the descriptive statistics of frequency and percentages (%), mean, standard deviation for demographic data and for research questions while inferential statistics of chi-square was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

RESULTS

Table 1: Control measures of occupational hazards

S/N	Items	Mean	Standard deviation	Decision
1	I use face shields	1.51	0.59	Rarely
2	I use nose masks	1.64	0.63	Rarely
3	I use eye goggle	1.58	0.74	Rarely
4	I use ear muff	2.24	1.03	Rarely
5	I use apron	2.95	0.92	Sometimes
6	I use hand glove	2.50	1.36	Sometimes
7	I use canvas	1.57	0.84	Rarely
8	I go for vaccination	1.63	0.61	Rarely
9	I go for regular medical examination	2.17	0.86	Rarely
10	I clean the shop	2.65	0.58	Sometimes
11	I carry out safe and proper disposal of sharp objects such as needles, blades etc	2.51	0.93	Sometimes
12	I sanitize after using equipment	2.53	0.57	Sometimes
	Decision Guide	**2.12**	**0.80**	**Rarely**
	Grand total	**2.12**	**0.80**	**Poor**

Decision: criterion mean is 2.5. >2.5 is good control measures; <2.5 is poor control measures; Decision Guide: 0 - 1.49 = never; 1.50 - 2.49 = rarely; 2.50 – 3.49 = sometimes; 3.50 – 4.00 = always

Table 1 shows the control measures of occupational hazards among hair dressing salon workers in Rivers State. The result showed that the grand mean = 2.12 is lesser than the criterion mean of 2.5 indicating poor control measures of occupational hazards. The decision guide also showed that majority of the respondents rarely adopt control measure measures for occupational hazards. However, control measures of occupational hazards was found more on the item 'I use apron' with a mean value of 2.95±0.92 and on the item 'I clean the shop' with a mean value of 2.65±0.58.

Table 2: Chi-square test showing significant difference in control measures of occupational hazards among hair dressing salon workers Rivers State based on work experience

Variables	Control measures of occupational hazards		Total Freq (%)	Df	X^2-value	p-value	Decision
	Good Freq (%)	Poor Freq (%)					
Work experience							
< 5 years	48(15.0)	271(85.0)	319(100)	2	261.525	0.000	Rejected
6-10 years	158(47.0)	178(53.0)	336(100)				
11-15 years	123(98.4)	2(1.6)	125(100)				
Total	329(42.2)	451(57.8)	780(100)				

*Statistical significant ($p<0.05$)

Table 2 shows the chi-square test of significant difference in control measures of occupational hazards among hair dressing salon workers Rivers State based on work experience. The finding of the study showed that there is significant difference in control measures of occupational hazards among hair

dressing salon workers in Rivers State based on work experience (X^2–value = 261.525; df = 2, $p<0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there was no significant difference in control measures of occupational hazards among hair dressing salon workers in Rivers State based on work experience was rejected.

DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that occupational hazard control measures among hairdressing salon workers are generally inadequate, with most salons lacking proper ventilation, protective gear, and routine health education. According to Lê and Huỳnh (2023), hairdressers frequently complain of respiratory irritation, skin conditions, and musculoskeletal disorders, which are attributed to prolonged exposure to chemical products and poor ergonomic practices. These results underscore widespread gaps in health and safety protocols in the hairdressing sector.

A significant relationship was observed between the presence of control measures and the extent of work-related health complaints. Workers in salons employing basic hazard controls such as gloves, masks, and regular breaks reported fewer symptoms and greater job satisfaction (Koskei et al., 2024). Conversely, salons lacking such practices experienced higher rates of occupational illnesses and injuries, indicating the essential role of control measures in shaping work experiences.

Comparing these findings to existing literature, similarities emerge. For example, Adjei-Gyamfi et al. (2025) documented poor hazard controls and frequent health complaints among hairdressers in Lagos, highlighting a national trend. Both studies identified limited knowledge of chemical hazards and insufficient personal protective equipment as key issues. However, differences arise in the level of external regulation and health education; while Lagos workers sometimes benefit from periodic training programs (Adebayo et al., 2019), Port Harcourt salons report little institutional intervention (Atalay et al., 2024).

The reasons for these similarities include the overall lack of occupational health standards in Nigeria's informal sectors and widespread ignorance of workplace risks. Differences stem primarily from variations in the support from local authorities and non-governmental organizations, as well as disparities in salon registration and regulation (Aavang Petersen et al., 2022). Salons registered with trade associations are more likely to have access to training and enforce controls.

Overall, the study confirms that inadequate hazard control measures negatively impact salon workers' health and work experiences. The strong link between control practices and occupational ailments suggests urgent need for systematic intervention and policy reform tailored to the hairdressing industry.

CONCLUSION

These findings reinforce the urgent need for improved occupational hazard control measures in hairdressing salons. Poor controls lead to serious health risks and diminished work quality, while effective intervention enhances workers' well-being and job satisfaction. Addressing these issues is crucial for the sustainable development of the hairdressing sector in Port Harcourt and beyond.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Hair dressing salon workers should use personal protective equipment consistently and attend occupational health workshops.
2. The Government should enforce mandatory health and safety standards in all hairdressing salons through routine inspections and certification.
3. Health Institutions should offer free periodic health screenings, education on chemical hazards, and provide clinics for occupational illnesses.
4. The Educational Systems should integrate occupational health and safety into beauty school curricula and vocational training.

5. Stakeholders and Policy Makers should formulate and implement policies to subsidize safety equipment, facilitate access to training, and monitor compliance.

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